

**Letter to Eagles and Steelers Owners Says Talk Show Host Should Not Be Accepted as NFL Owner**

October 14, 2009

MEDIA, PA – Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) wrote to Philadelphia Eagles Chairman and CEO Jeffrey Lurie and Pittsburgh Steelers Chairman Dan Rooney today opposing the attempt by Rush Limbaugh to obtain an ownership stake in the National Football League's St. Louis Rams. The following letters were delivered to their respective offices, noting the talk show host's history of divisive and offensive comments – including about Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb – and urging Mr. Lurie and Mr. Rooney to join the NFL Players Association and Indianapolis Colts Owner Jim Irsay in their opposition to Mr. Limbaugh:

Mr. Jeffrey Lurie  
Chairman/Chief Executive Officer  
Philadelphia Eagles  
1 Novacare Way  
Philadelphia, PA 19145-5996

Dear Mr. Lurie,

I am writing to urge you to join the NFL Players Association and Indianapolis Colts Owner and CEO James Irsay in publicly opposing Rush Limbaugh's attempt to acquire one of the league's 32 valued franchises. Mr. Limbaugh's history of racially-toned and divisive comments is appalling. As organizations across the country make strides toward equality and we witness the breaking of artificial barriers such as race, gender and ethnicity, Mr. Limbaugh's offensive tirades should not receive the platform of one of our country's most popular and defining institutions.

When Mr. Limbaugh unfortunately received an opportunity to pontificate to the NFL's huge and diverse fan base as a pregame-show commentator in 2003, he targeted our quarterback, stating that Donovan McNabb received undeserved credit for the Philadelphia Eagles' performance because of his race. Limbaugh offered no remorse or even a hint that he understood the absurdity and inappropriateness of his commentary.

Donovan, who I have had the great pleasure to honor for his community service, offered an appropriate response: "It's sad that you've got to go to skin color. I thought we were through with that whole deal."

As an owner, you have demonstrated an understanding of the impact that an NFL team can have beyond wins and losses. Under your leadership, the Eagles have performed at a high level not only on the field, but also in the community. I admire the commitment of your organization to using its standing in our region to provide better educational opportunities for our children and to create initiatives that raise awareness and funds to fight disease.

Rush Limbaugh preaches values diametrically opposed to those of the Eagles and the NFL. He represents a faction that constantly attempts to create divisions among us, whether by race, politics or other means. His entry into the league will send a message to its vast number of followers -- including millions of young people -- that the NFL accepts his past remarks, such as those directed at one of your players, and is prepared to associate with his often-reprehensible statements.

I hope that you and other owners around the league will take a stand and pledge to thwart any attempt by Mr. Limbaugh to become an NFL owner.

Sincerely,

Joe Sestak  
Member of Congress

Mr. Dan Rooney  
Chairman  
Pittsburgh Steelers  
3400 South Water Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15203-2349

Dear Mr. Rooney,

I am writing to express my support of the NFL Players Association and Indianapolis Colts Owner and CEO Jim Irsay in publicly opposing Rush Limbaugh's attempt to acquire one of the league's 32 valued franchises. Mr. Limbaugh's history of racially-toned and divisive comments is appalling. As organizations across the country make strides toward equality and we witness the breaking of artificial barriers such as race, gender and ethnicity, Mr. Limbaugh's offensive tirades should not receive the platform of one of our country's most popular and defining institutions.

You and your family have demonstrated a commitment to fairness and accountability as leading statesmen for the National Football League. The establishment of the "Rooney Rule" to ensure fair opportunities for minority coaches in our most prominent sport shows your commitment to ensuring that the NFL reflects our highest ideals. I urge you to oppose Limbaugh's efforts.

When Mr. Limbaugh unfortunately received an opportunity to pontificate to the NFL's huge and diverse fan base as a pregame-show commentator in 2003, he targeted quarterback Donovan McNabb saying that he received undeserved credit for the Philadelphia Eagles' performance because of his race. Limbaugh offered no remorse or even a hint that he understood the absurdity and inappropriateness of his commentary.

NFL teams and the league as a whole have an impact on our society beyond the games on the field. Rush Limbaugh preaches values diametrically opposed to those of the Steelers and the NFL. He represents a faction that constantly attempts to create divisions among us, whether by race, politics or other means. His entry into the league will send a message to its vast number of followers -- including millions of young people -- that the NFL accepts his past remarks, such as those directed at one of your players, and is prepared to associate with his often-reprehensible statements.

I hope that the current NFL owners will pledge to thwart any attempt by Mr. Limbaugh to purchase a franchise.

Sincerely,

Joe Sestak  
Member of Congress